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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
14 August 2025 (7.00 - 7.50 pm)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS:

Conservative Group Jacqueline McArdle and Carol Smith

Havering Residents' Group Robby Misir (in the Chair) Reg Whitney and Gerry O'Sullivan

Labour Patricia Brown

15 members of the public were present.

Unless otherwise indicated all decisions were agreed with no vote against.

Through the Chairman, announcements were made regarding emergency evacuation arrangements and the decision making process followed by the Committee.

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received for the Councillors Bryan Vincent, Philippa Crowder and Matthew Stanton. Councillor Gerry O'Sullivan substituted for Councillor Vincent, Councillor Reg Whitney substituted for Councillor Philippa Crowder and Councillor Patricia Brown substituted for Councillor Stanton.

29 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interests.

30 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 April 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31 P0035.25 - 13 WALLINGER AVENUE, ROMFORD (SQUIRRELS HEATH)

The Committee considered a report that sought planning permission for the retention of the existing outbuilding within the site.

The outbuilding measures approximately 4m wide, 13.3m deep and up to 2.9m high at its maximum point. The outbuilding also benefits from an attached canopy which measures approximately 3m high and projects approximately 3.8m deep.

A Councillor call-in has been received which accords with the Committee consideration criteria.

The application had been called-in by a Ward Councillor. With its agreement Councillor Christine Vickery addressed the Committee stating objection on the following grounds:

- Backland development
- Overdevelopment of site which is not in keeping with area
- Not in keeping with special character of area
- Loss of privacy
- Noise and disturbance issues
- Dominating impacts on its surroundings and nearby properties

The Committee noted that the gym and playroom were part of the outbuilding, and that, in the event planning permission was to be granted, a condition would be imposed to ensure that any use of the outbuilding remained incidental to the main residential use of the property.

It was stated that, in theory, this condition should prevent the outbuilding from being used as residential accommodation. However, if it later transpired that the outbuilding was being used for residential purposes, this would be a matter requiring further investigation or enforcement action.

Members noted that this development was not considered permitted development due to its height. Officers explained that if the structure were 2.5 metres or lower, it would not require planning permission. However, because it exceeds that limit—currently standing at 2.9 metres—permission is required.

The Committee noted that the application before it was a retrospective application that was submitted following an enforcement case because the enforcement team engaged with the homeowner.

Officers stated that the applicant were given two options: either reduce the height to 2.5 metres to comply with permitted development rules, or submit a planning application. They chose the latter.

Concern that the outbuilding would set precedent for the road, it was explained that the issue of precedent be considered in this application. It was stated that allowing the structure to remain, even if lowered, could encourage others to build without permission and seek retrospective approval later. That undermines the integrity of the planning process.

Concerns were raised that the new out building occupied two thirds of the garden area. A question was raised regarding the percentage of garden space that must remain undeveloped before further construction could be permitted. In response it was suggested that the threshold might be around 25%, which would be considered substantial.

The Committee discussed the distance between the proposed development and the boundary of the property. It was noted that the view from the rear elevation appeared to be approximately 7 metres from the boundary, although clarification was sought on the exact measurement.

A Member raised concerns regarding the proximity of the development to the boundary and queried whether a party wall agreement was in place. It was noted that party wall legislation allowed for construction up to the boundary, subject to a valid party wall agreement.

In reply Officers clarified that planning permission did not convey property rights and that even if permission was granted, the applicant would still require the appropriate ownership or legal agreements such as a party wall agreement to proceed with the development.

It was acknowledged that the structure in question was not built directly on the boundary, but approximately 0.84 metres away. A Member expressed concern that the development appeared retrospective and questioned its fairness in relation to neighbouring properties.

Members noted that neighbouring properties had fencing approximately 6 feet in height, but concerns were raised that this might not be sufficient to mitigate overlooking or privacy issues. It was suggested that even with fencing in place, objections could still arise if the separation distance was deemed inadequate.

Following debate, Members voted against the proposal to grant planning permission by 4 votes against to 1 and 1 abstention.

Councillors O'Sullivan, Whitney, McArdle and Brown voted against while Councillor Misir voted in favour and Councillor Christine Smith abstained from the vote.

Following Member decision not to approve the application. Grounds for refusal were discussed, and the following reasons were noted:

- Height
- Bulk

- Size
- Visual Impact
- Impact on residential amenities
- Proximity to boundary

Members voted on the substantive motion and decided to **Refuse** the application to grant planning permission.

The vote was carried by 5 votes to 1. Councillor Misir voted against the motion.

Chairman